

accepted most of his changes. I wrote a paragraph on my reluctance and a listing of those changes not accepted (1984, Preface, p. viii).

I consider that Wheeler has done a valuable service in presenting his views.

Additional reference

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I should like to express my strong support for Alwyne Wheeler's views on this matter. The situation described by Wheeler, resulting from the strict application of Latin grammar by Steyskal (1980), is absolutely ridiculous, and quite out of keeping with the Code's main aim of stability in nomenclature. There should be a blanket decision by the Commission, rejecting all the changes made by Steyskal.

Comment on the proposed precedence of HOMALOPTERIDAE Bleeker, 1859 over BALITORIDAE Swainson, 1839 (Osteichthyes, Cypriniformes) (Case 2703; see BZN 47: 277–279)

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We do not agree with Hieronimus's proposal to give HOMALOPTERIDAE Bleeker, 1859 precedence over BALITORIDAE Swainson, 1839. We do not believe that changing the name from HOMALOPTERIDAE to BALITORIDAE will cause any confusion among scientists and seriously doubt its impact in popular circles.

Hieronimus (para. 3) states that 'Kottelat (1988, p. 489) himself admits that the replacement of HOMALOPTERIDAE by BALITORIDAE creates additional confusion in the suborder Cobitoidei. I cannot follow Kottelat in his opinion that an immediate introduction of the family-group name BALITORIDAE, which had been overlooked for about 150 years, would help to create a stable nomenclature'. This is erroneous and misleading. Kottelat actually wrote: 'Considering recent and expected changes in systematics and nomenclature in Cobitoidei... replacement of HOMALOPTERIDAE with BALITORIDAE should not create much additional confusion. Conservation of HOMALOPTERIDAE would be possible only by use of the plenary powers by the International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature. This would require a long procedure and thus, immediate introduction of the valid name better helps to create a stable nomenclature'. Kottelat's rationale behind not applying to the Commission was precisely to avoid the nomenclatural problems the family name of the torrent loaches now faces: whether it is to be BALITORIDAE according to the Principle of Priority, or HOMALOPTERIDAE following Article 79. Hieronimus appears to have misunderstood Kottelat's action and a problem faced by all taxonomists engaged in revisionary studies. If the intention is

nomenclatural stability, an application to conserve HOMALOPTERIDAE, if indeed the name is so well accepted, should have been made much earlier, not some two years after the publication of Kottelat's 1988 paper. [Editorial note: the receipt of Herr Hieronimus's application was announced in March 1989 (BZN 46: 2)].

Hieronimus (BZN 47: 277, para. 5) refers to the application by Kottelat (BZN 43: 360–362) to settle the type species of *Cobitis* Linnaeus, 1758, the type genus of COBITIDAE. That application was necessary to keep the name COBITIDAE (one of the most widely used family names in ichthyology) as currently understood, and was approved in Opinion 1500 (BZN 45: 178). Its failure would have affected the names and status of four family or subfamily groups (COBITIDAE, NEMACHEILINAE, ACANTHOPSIDAE and HOMALOPTERIDAE) and three genera (*Cobitis*, *Nemacheilus* and *Acanthopthalmus*). The situation for HOMALOPTERIDAE and BALITORIDAE is not comparable, since it does not have wide implications for other names.

Almost all references to the family HOMALOPTERIDAE have been taxonomic. In recent years, however, a growing number of references to the name have been by aquarists. For example, in the 12 years between 1977 and 1989, *Zoological Record* lists only 41 papers using the name HOMALOPTERIDAE; 34 of these are biological, almost all of which are taxonomic (five by Kottelat and his colleagues), and two are ecological. The remaining seven are from aquarium journals. These figures exclude a large number of popular aquarium books and magazines which have referred to this family. These fishes have not been the subject of experimental research. From this it is clear that the name HOMALOPTERIDAE lacks the general scientific usage Hieronimus implies.

Considering the current state of Southeast Asian ichthyology, we know the taxonomic problems mentioned by Kottelat are very real. Roberts (1989, p. 82) commented that the 'higher classification of the HOMALOPTERIDAE is in an unsatisfactory state'. The systematics of the family is still very unstable (see also Sawada, 1982) and many taxonomic changes can be expected in coming years.

As scientists working in the region where torrent loaches are common, and frequent references to these fish are made in our studies, we feel strongly that the Principle of Priority should be strictly adhered to unless the reasons behind invoking Article 79 are extremely strong. Otherwise, revisionary fish taxonomy will be seriously held up. Each time a change in name based on the Principle of Priority is proposed, applications will be made to the Commission to change it back on the grounds of 'familiarity'. Every adoption of a name will eventually have to wait for Commission deliberation and validation. This is clearly a most unsatisfactory state of affairs. The amount of confusion can only escalate. We have used BALITORIDAE and have recommended this name to our colleagues in scientific and popular publications since 1988 (see, for example, Lim et al., 1990a, 1990b; Lim & Ng, 1990; Ng, 1990a, 1990b; Ng & Lim, 1990; Munro, 1990), and have faced no problems or criticisms whatsoever.

Thus, there is no general and widespread scientific usage of the name HOMALOPTERIDAE, and BALITORIDAE has been accepted in recent years. We hope the Commission will rule against the present proposal as it appears to be nothing more than an attempt to keep a familiar aquarium name.

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Comments on the proposed conservation of the specific name of *Rivulus marmoratus* Poey, 1880 (Osteichthyes, Cyprinodontiformes)

(Case 2722; see BZN 47: 191–194)

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Lazara & Smith agree with my work (1984) that *Rivulus ocellatus* Hensel, 1868 and *R. marmoratus* Poey, 1880 are likely to be conspecific (para. 4 of their application). However, the arguments for suppressing the name *ocellatus* in favour of *marmoratus* are not as simple as they suggest. There is a type specimen for *ocellatus* but there are no types for *marmoratus*, according to Lazara & Smith (para. 1). As they say, the specimens identified by Rivas (1945) as the types of *marmoratus* are labelled *R. cylindraceus* Poey, 1861, a species with which *marmoratus* was considered synonymous (see below). In my 1984 paper I accepted that Rivas had traced Poey's original specimens; I was not able to have these specimens on loan when preparing my publication. Without types there is uncertainty about the true (original) identity of *marmoratus* Poey, 1880 and it is incorrect to say that 'this does not affect the case'. Moreover, there is no exact type locality for *marmoratus*, Poey (1880) having described the locality as 'Cuba, if they do not exist in the United States of America'.

Lazara & Smith state (para. 3) that *marmoratus* 'is the only name applied to the species in the experimental and genetic literature prior to Seegers, 1984'. However, *marmoratus* is not the only name that has been used in general biological literature: the authors failed to mention that until Rivas's publication (1945) *marmoratus* was placed in the synonymy of *cylindraceus* by nearly all ichthyologists (see, for example, Garman, 1895; Regan, 1912; Myers, 1927; Jordan, Evermann & Clark, 1930). In my list of synonyms (Seegers, 1984, pp. 295–297) I commented on most publications of the name *marmoratus*, and there is also an annotated list in Rivas (1945, p. 96). It is only